

(b) Representations have been received from traders/growers associations of pepper in the country including the States of Kerala and Karnataka regarding alleged import of low quality pepper into India from Vietnam through Sri Lanka. Since most of the pepper producing countries are in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, the stakeholders have raised apprehensions of routing the pepper produced in ASEAN countries including Vietnam, to India through Sri Lanka, by utilizing the provisions of India Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISLFTA) and Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA).

(c) In order to stop the possibility of inferior quality pepper of other countries entering into India through Sri Lanka to take duty advantage and to stabilize the domestic prices of pepper, Government has fixed the CIF value of ₹ 500/- per kg as Minimum Import Price for Black Pepper *vide* DGFT Notification dated 6.12.2017.

Sri Lankan Authorities have been requested to exercise extreme care and diligence in issuing the Certificates of Origin under ISLFTA and SAFTA. Government of Sri Lanka has informed that Sri Lanka Customs along with Ministry of Primary Industries and National Quarantine Service have introduced a new procedure with the aim of preventing Sri Lankan exporters from obtaining SAFTA or ISLFTA Certificates of Origin issued by the Department for third-country black pepper shipments destined to India.

Increase in prices of Petrol and Diesel

†*51. SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to fix the prices of petrol and diesel on a daily basis and whether it is a fact that the prices of petrol and diesel have been rising continuously since this decision was taken even as the price of crude oil is very low in the international market;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if not, the details of total cost of production of petrol and diesel and their delivery to the market?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): (a) to (c) The prices of petrol and diesel have been made market determined by the Government effective from 26th June, 2010 and 19th October, 2014 respectively and since then their prices are being decided by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in line with the changes in the international market prices.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Public Sector OMCs, namely, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited have implemented daily revision of retail selling price of petrol and diesel in the entire country effective 16th June, 2017.

The details of number of times the prices of petrol and diesel were increased/decreased/no change since 16th June, 2017 till 15th December, 2017 in Delhi are given as under:—

(Period 16th June-15th December, 2017)

Particulars	Petrol (No. of days)	Diesel (No. of days)
No. of Days Price Increased	103	101
No. of Days Price Decreased	54	41
No. of Days No Change in Price	25	34

The International FOB prices of petrol and diesel *vis-a-vis* domestic retail selling prices at Delhi on 16th June, 2017 and 14th December, 2017 are given below:—

Particulars	Unit	Petrol		Diesel	
		16.06.17	14.12.17	16.06.17	14.12.17
International product price	\$/bbl	60.09	72.91	58.27	72.77
RSP at Delhi	₹/Ltr	65.48	69.07	54.49	58.33

Further, Government had reduced the Central Excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹ 2 per litre effective 4th October, 2017.

The Central Government also requested the State Governments to reduce VAT imposed by them on petrol and diesel so as to give more relief to the consumers. Accordingly, 3 State Governments and 1 Union Territory have reduced the VAT on petrol and diesel.

Skill development in Saansad Adarsh Grams

†*52. DR. SUBHASH CHANDRA: Will the Minister of SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP be pleased to state:

(a) the number of employment opportunities created till date for the skilled manpower in Saansad Adarsh Grams, the State-wise details thereof;

(b) the details of various schemes implemented for the skill development and creation of employment in Saansad Adarsh Grams; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.